

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SPECIAL ELECTIONS HOME RULE ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Special Elections Home Rule Act. This bill would give the District of Columbia complete authority to set the date of special elections for local offices, like other jurisdictions. This bill simply removes a D.C. Home Rule Act limitation on the District that is not only inconsistent with the self-government granted by the Home Rule Act, but is also counterproductive.

This bill allows legislation we got enacted in 2012 that gave the D.C. Board of Elections ("Board") more flexibility to set the date of special elections for local offices to maximize voter participation. Although we sought complete authority for the District over the scheduling of special elections, the 2012 law, the District of Columbia Special Election Reform Act, did not include this home-rule principle. D.C. should have complete authority over a matter that is unrelated to any other congressional district and has no relevance to Congress.

The Home Rule Act originally required the Board to hold special elections on the first Tuesday occurring more than 114 days after a vacancy and allowed the Board to schedule special elections on the same day as the next general election if that election occurred within 60 days from when a special election would otherwise have been held. This inflexibility led to special elections being held on religious holidays and forced the District to hold a special election separate from an upcoming general election, costing the District hundreds of thousands of dollars. The 2012 law requires the Board to hold a special election on a Tuesday occurring between 70 and 174 days after a vacancy.

This bill is an important step to perfect home rule for the District. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

COMMEMORATING THE 32ND ANNIVERSARY OF BLACK JANUARY IN AZERBAIJAN

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the anniversary of the "Black January" killings, one of the most tragic events in Azerbaijan's history.

Thirty-two years ago, on the night of January 20, 1990, approximately 26,000 Soviet troops stormed Azerbaijan's capital city of Baku in tanks and armored vehicles. The Soviet military bulldozed and opened fired on innocent Azerbaijanis and peaceful protestors, including women and children. The resulting casualties of these brutal acts were 147 people killed, around 800 injured, 841 arrested, and 5 missing. I offer my thoughts and prayers to the families of those who gave their lives for the independence of Azerbaijan.

Despite these merciless acts, the Azerbaijani people were not deterred. They continued to fight for their freedom and became independent in 1991. The United States was one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence and fully established diplomatic relations on February 28, 1992. The relationship between our two countries endures to this day. The United States and Azerbaijan are strategic allies and share common interests in the region and globally.

As the co-chairman of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, I urge my colleagues to recognize the sacrifices of the Azerbaijani people in their steps toward a free-market economy and encourage a recommitment to the democratic values for which many Azerbaijanis sacrificed their lives.

HONORING OUTGOING DEARBORN CITY COUNCIL MEMBER BRIAN O'DONNELL

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Brian O'Donnell on the occasion of his retirement from the City Council of Dearborn, Michigan, where he has honorably served for over ten years. His significant contributions to our community are worthy of commendation.

Mr. O'Donnell is a graduate of Divine Child High School in Dearborn. He also attended Madonna University and Baker College. An active member of the Dearborn community for over two decades, he has served as a City Beautiful Commissioner, as Vice President of the Dearborn Federation of Neighborhood Associations, and as a trustee of the Dearborn Hills Civic Association. Beyond serving on the Council, he has worked for the Bristol-Myers Squibb Company and the State of Michigan.

While on the Dearborn City Council, Mr. O'Donnell was dedicated to promoting smart government spending while still ensuring that the City can continue to provide stellar service to the residents of Dearborn. His voice was constantly a part of the productive discussion and progress made during his time on the Council. From fixing broken streetlights to participating in countless community events around town, his focus was on revitalizing and stabilizing our neighborhoods and making them a better place for all. Mr. O'Donnell's leadership and insight are an asset to the Dearborn community at large. He continues to live in the Dearborn area with his wife Julia and their children Sean and Cece.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Brian O'Donnell. We are grateful for his time spent serving the citizens of Dearborn as a member of the City Council. I join with his family, friends, and colleagues in extending my best wishes to him in the future.

HONORING FRIENDS OF LOXAHATCHEE

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, a non-profit organization in Florida's 21st Congressional District. Since its founding in 1982, the Friends of Loxahatchee have been tirelessly committed to conserving Florida's beautiful natural ecosystems for future generations to enjoy.

The Friends of Loxahatchee was our nation's first U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Friends group. Throughout its years of operation, the over 300 member organization has supported environmental education and wildlife protection services at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge—the northernmost part of the Florida Everglades. The contributions made by Friends of Loxahatchee members and volunteers have introduced countless children across South Florida to science and the wonder of the Everglades. Their projects have engaged disadvantaged youth in environmental conservation and coastal clean-up efforts, funded transportation to the Refuge for school and community groups, and renovated the Refuge Visitor Center and its exhibits.

I am proud to honor the Friends of Loxahatchee for their years of service to the people of South Florida, their education of the next generation of leaders, and their dedication to protecting our animals, plants, and habitats. I look forward to their contributions in the years ahead.

HONORING ANICETO "CHETO" PEREZ, JR.

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Mr. VELA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Aniceto "Cheto" Perez, Jr., of Alice, Texas. Aniceto has dedicated his life to public service and law enforcement for over three decades and has made a lasting impact on the people of South Texas.

Aniceto was born to Aniceto Perez, Sr. and Martha Valerio Perez of San Diego, Texas in 1959. After graduating from San Diego High School in 1978, Aniceto knew he wanted to establish a career in law enforcement. He began his career with the Duval County Sheriffs Department in 1978, serving as a telecommunicator and jailer before transferring to the City of Alice Police Department.

Aniceto started at the Alice Police Department as a uniformed patrol officer and was promoted three years later to the Narcotics Unit. As a narcotics investigator, Aniceto performed undercover operations and served as a member of the Narcotics Task Force, working closely with local, state, and federal agencies. Aniceto was then promoted once again, this time to Sergeant Investigator of the Narcotics Unit, making him the lead investigator